

acme!!! presents:

Itsuka Tomodachi ja Nakunaru to Shite mo

by Iuka Kasa

Chapter 1

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In Operation
Oh God, please
Oh God,
It's my fault...
I'll give you everything I have, if...
God, save Shuuhei.


CHAPTER 1


SIZZLE
L-LIKE THIS!?
FOLD IT OVER AGAIN AND—.
YUP,
WHAT-EVER,
LET'S PACK IT FOR LUNCH
floppy
AWW!
Ahh
FNGH
CLANK
YEEHAW!
HOW ARE YOU DOING AT HOME?
AH, DECENT I GUESS
YOU'RE STILL BAD AT THIS, TOMO
Sorry

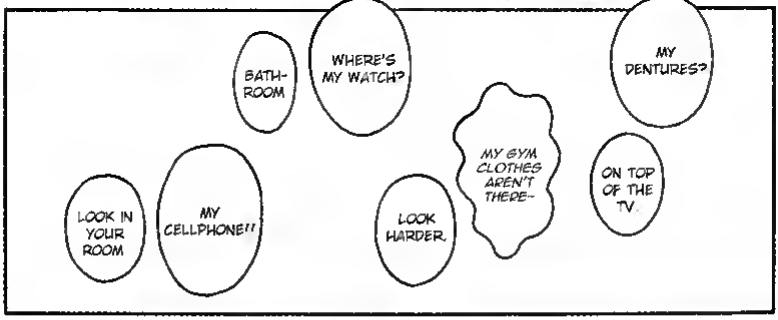

YOU KNOW I'M SENSITIVE ABOUT THAT...
IS THAT WHY YOU'RE STILL SO SHORT?
WHA-
I CAN AT LEAST MAKE SOME FOR YOU
WELL,
THUD
THUD
WAHHHHH! BIG BROTHER SHUU!
YOU CAN ALWAYS COME OVER TO EAT.


HUH? WHAT?
HEY, YOU!
NO!!!
BIG SIS WON'T GIVE ME THE DRYER!
BIG BRO SHUJI! WHERE'RE MY GYM CLOTHES!?
THUD THUD THUD
DON'T CRY, I'LL TIE IT UP FOR YOU.
tear up
WAHHH WHHH!!!
EH? REALLY?! I DIDN'T SEE THEM!
THUD THUD
WEREN'T THEY ON THE STAIRCASE?



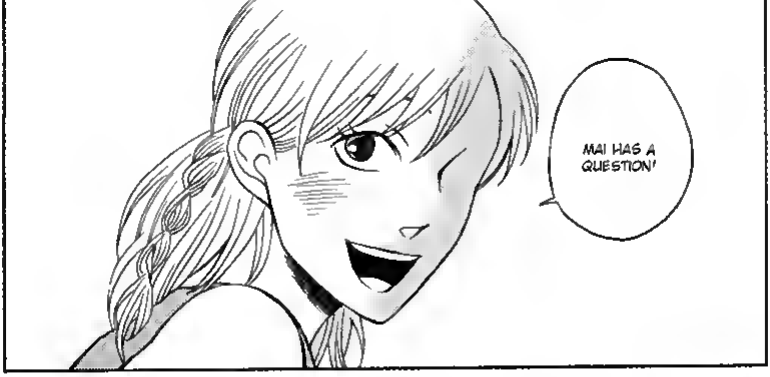


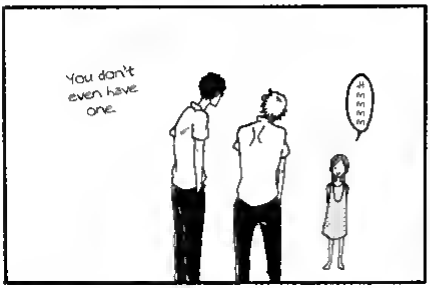
T/L NOTE REFERRING TO SISTER-IN-LAW

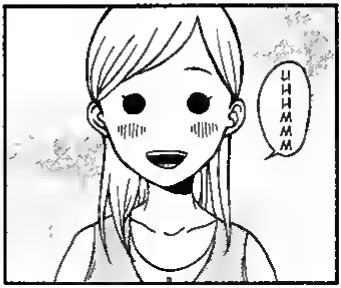







MAI HAS A QUESTION!

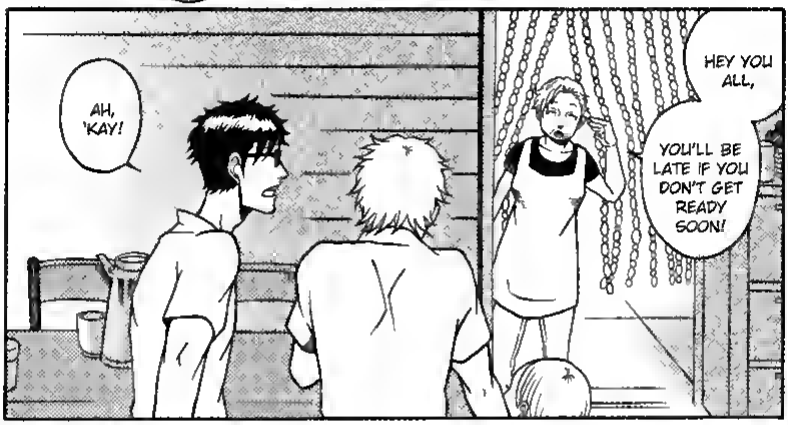

You don't even have one.
Hmmm


UHHMMM


AH, DOES TOMO-CHAN.
LIKE SOMEONE?


EHHH!?
Biuuuuuuuu
EH?
HUH!?
OH, THAT
EHH
THAT'S A SECRET

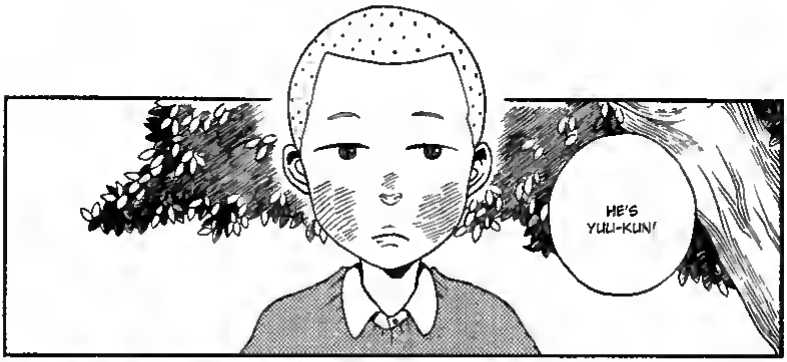

I'VE NEVER TALKED ABOUT IT WITH YOU!
HA!? WHADDYA MEAN, SECRET!?
EH, WHY IS IT A SECRET?


AH, 'KAY!
HEY YOU ALL,
YOU'LL BE LATE IF YOU DON'T GET READY SOON!


...HE COULDN'T..


WHAT..A SECRET..
DOES HE KNOW SOMETHING?


Because the one I like is you.

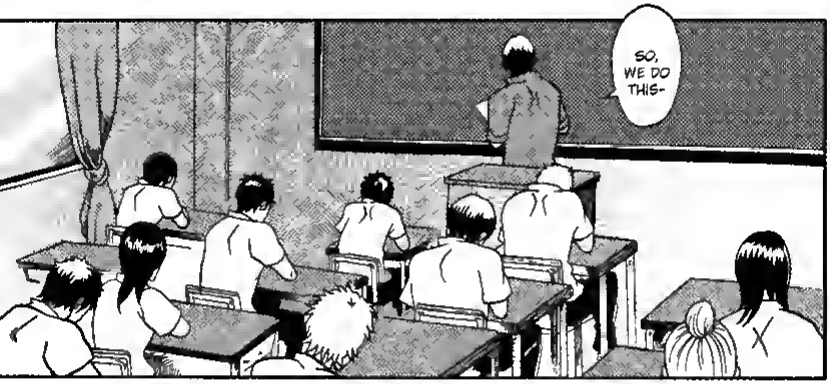

HE'S YUU-KUN!

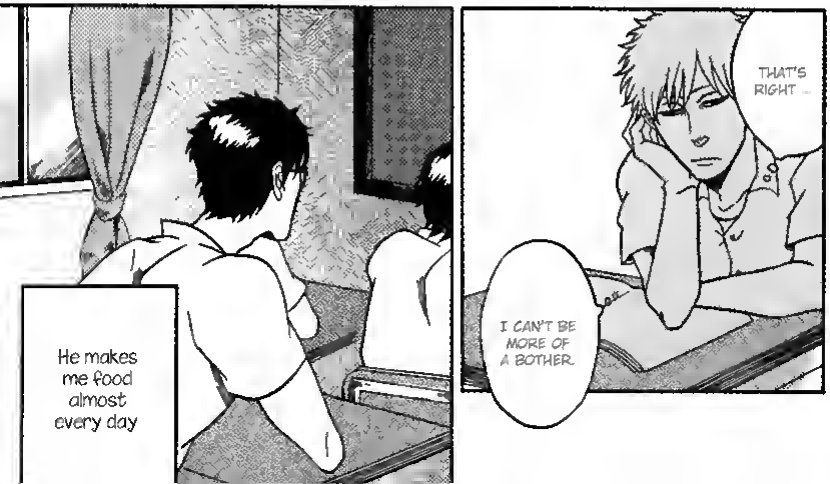

MAI'S BOYFRIEND!
幼稚園

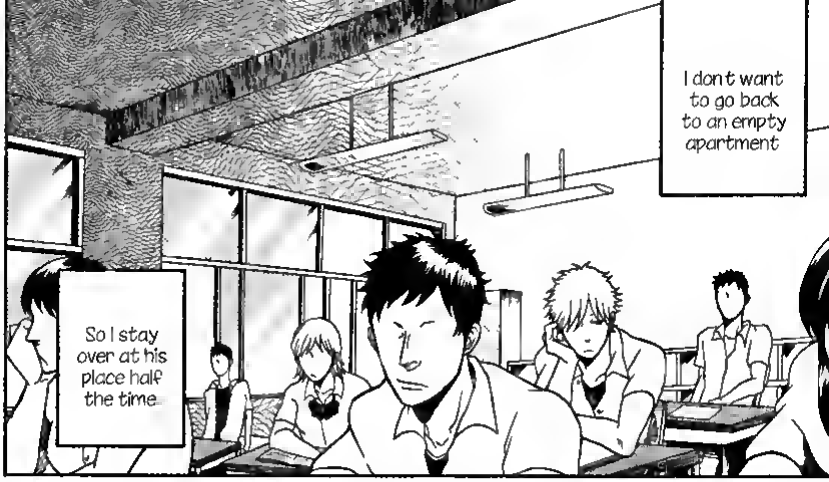

AREN'T YOU IN KINDER-GARTEN!?
SO THAT'S WHY YOU'VE BEEN DRESSING UP
EVERYONE'S HERE!
YOU MEAN, BOY-FRIEND?
BOY-FRIEND
MHM
... BOY-FRIEND?
YEP, BOYFRIEND
smile
sparkle
pitty
KOTANI-SAN
TOMO-CHAN
You're so cute
C-CAN I TOUCH IT...?


YOU SHOULD GO OUT WITH YOUR CRUSH!
whisper
I MEAN,
I DON'T WANT TO BE A BOTHER...
I WONDER
I'M HAPPY JUST LIKING HIM.


KAAAY!
EITHER GRANDMA OR MOM WILL PICK YOU UP.
We're gonna be late.
LET'S GO, TOMO
MKAY


SO, WE DO THIS-


He makes me food almost every day
I CAN'T BE MORE OF A BOTHER.
THAT'S RIGHT...


I don't want to go back to an empty apartment
So I stay over at his place half the time.


AND IT MAKES ME REALLY HAPPY


If I do, then he'll definitely make me lunch.


HEY, MASHIMA!! WHAT'RE YOU SPACING OUT FOR?!
I...
ERK


NEVER.
BUT I CAN'T FORGET.


AH...
OH, UH-
TRY READING THE NEXT SECTION!


If Shuuhei really was an esper...
Then we wouldn't be able to stay like this.


ZOKUKI CLINIC


HMM...
HOW'S YOUR LEFT EYE?
AH... FINE.
I SEE...
YOUR VISION IN YOUR RIGHT EYE IS DROPPING.
SO YOU MAY WANT TO GET A NEW PAIR
AGAIN?
YES, IN YOUR CASE,
YOUR RIGHT EYE MAKES UP FOR THE FACT THAT YOU HAVE NO VISION IN YOUR LEFT ONE.
YOUR VISION WAS ALREADY LOW BEFORE THE INJURY.
WHAT ABOUT YOUR FRIEND?
I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM LATELY.
HE USED TO ALWAYS WAIT FOR YOU BACK IN THE DAY.
OH...


I WAS THE ONE WHO CAUSED THIS WOUND ANYWAY.
HE'S STILL WORRIED ABOUT IT.
I HAVEN'T BEEN TELLING HIM ABOUT THE HOSPITAL MUCH LATELY


I DON'T CARE MUCH, BUT HE ALWAYS HAS
AND IT WAS MY FAULT I FELL IN THE FIRST PLACE.
IT WAS JUST A PETTY FIGHT...

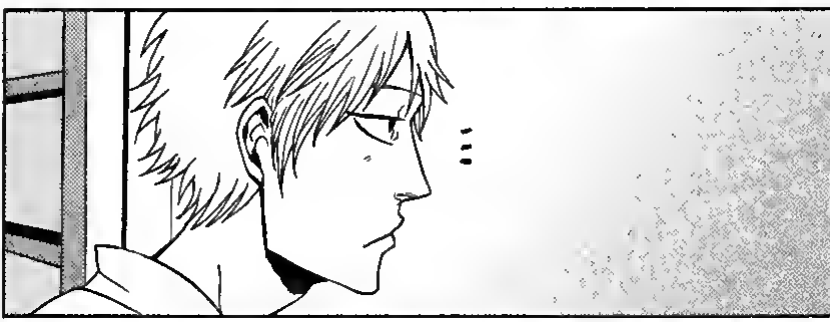

I SEE...
SO YOU STILL GET ALONG.


SO IT'S EASIER FOR HIM THIS WAY.
HAHA.
YOU'RE A GOOD FRIEND, SHUUHEI-KUN


PEOPLE USUALLY DISTANCE THEMSELVES AWAY, DON'T THEY?
OR HAPPENED BY CHANCE.
EVEN IF IT WAS AN ACCIDENT...
USUALLY,
YOU MUST TREASURE HIM.

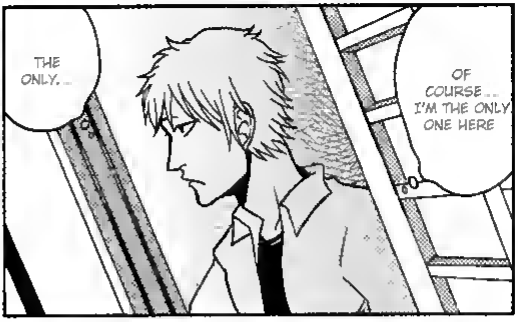

MASHIMA-SAAAN
knock knock
YOU'VE GOT MAIL
AH,
YES, EXCUSE ME
GA-SHUNK
IT'S A LUMP SUM, SO PLEASE PLACE YOUR SEAL...
THIS SUCKS...
I NEED A RAISE...
AH MAN...
flop
RIP

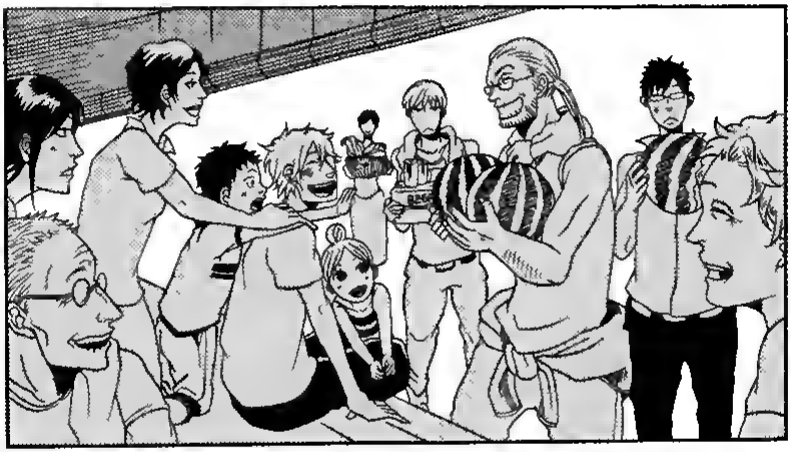

BUT HE'S SENDING ME MONEY FOR LIVING EXPENSES BECAUSE MOM LEFT .
MY BROTHER IS TOO NICE...
THIS IS JUST ...




CLATTER
Not a single sound.
...It's quiet




OF COURSE... I'M THE ONLY ONE HERE
THE ONLY...




I'LL BRING CLOTHES, GAMES,
BUT FIRST OFF, STUFF FOR STUDYING...


AH, AND I NEED TO...
BRING MY LUNCHBOX...


AGH, I'M GONNA GO TO SHUUHEI'S!
WE'RE OFF TO-MORROW ANYWAY!

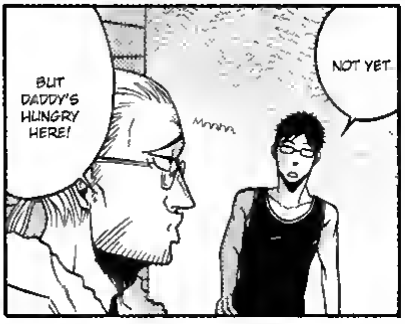

..OH, SHUUHEI!?
OUT SHOPPING?
YUP.
AND KOUHEI TOO?
ARE YOU COMING?
Heavy
THUNK
TOMO, CARRY THIS
EHHHH TOMO-CHAN, CARRY MY BAG!!!


YEAH
LET'S GO.
HEY, BIG BRO SHUU, WHAT'S FOR DINNER?
GYOZA!
OH, GYOZA!
I CAN HELP OUT WITH THAT!
EH, EVEN I CAN - AND I'M IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL!
SHUT IT, KOUHEI


MNNNN!
LEAVE IT TO THE GYOZA MASTER HERE
OF COURSE, MAI-CHAN!
MAI'S IS DIFFERENT! I CAN'T DO IT GOOD!!
THAT FACE PISSES ME OFF
I'M GOING TO THE SHOP.
THEN TEACH HER.
MKAAAY


DAD!
HEY, DINNER READY?


I'M HUNGRY TOO!
ME TOO!
EVEN GRANDPA AND BIG BRO...


NOT YET.
BUT DADDY'S HUNGRY HERE!
Mrrrhm.

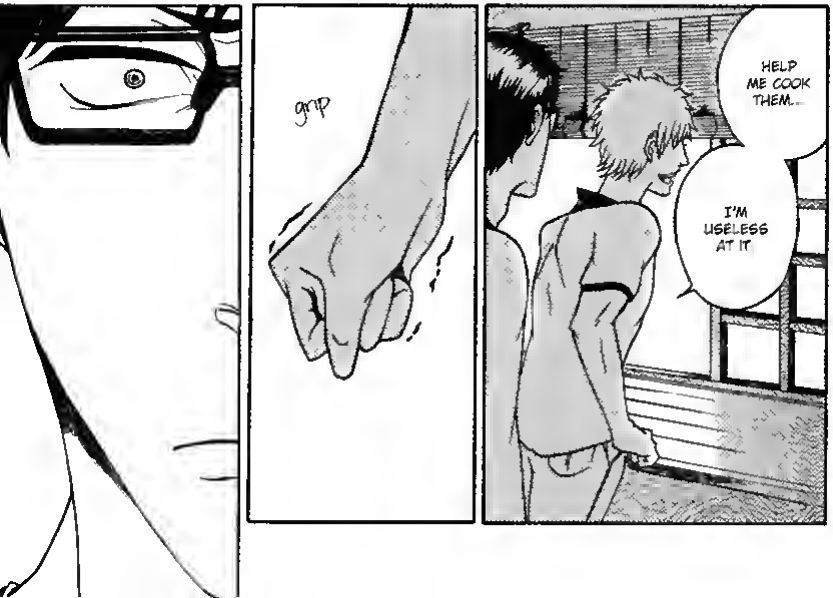

AH, THAT'S FINE
ASK YOUR MOM.
for the money


THEY TOLD ME AT THE HOSPITAL TODAY THAT I SHOULD GET NEW ONES.
AH— WELL,
IT'S ABOUT MY GLASSES.


THIS MATERIAL,
A thing of beauty
Yup Yup
LOOK! LOOK AT DADDY'S FURNITURE!!!
THE ORDERS ARE FLOODING IN!
THIS DESIGN,
THIS STURDINESS, THIS IS YOUR MOTHER'S BUSINESS!
I KNOW, I KNOW...
SORRY, IT'S A LOT.
WHAT'RE YOU SAYING?!
IF WE DON'T DO IT NOW...
THEN IT'LL GET EVEN WORSE LATER.
SO KIDS SHOULDN'T SAY THINGS LIKE THAT
"PUT OUT THE BEER!"
WHY DON'T YOU LET DADDY PICK SOME SUPER COOL GLASSES FOR YOU?
I'M JUST REPLACING THE LENSES




I DID IT!
I'M SO AWESOME!
AH-
THE GYOZA!


grip
HELP ME COOK THEM...
I'M USELESS AT IT


GRAB
JUST NOW..
...?
WHAT?
...YOU HEARD, DIDN'T YOU
COME HERE.
HUH,
WAI-SHUUHE!!
PULL
UH...


THUD
THUD
?
GA-SHUNK
THUD
SORRY
AH, IT'S NOT THAT
I DON'T CARE ABOUT THAT
BESIDES,
I'M THE ONE WHO SHOULD BE SAYING SORRY
HUH?
I DIDN'T MEAN ...
TO LISTEN...


...I'M SORRY
MY RIGHT EYE GOT A LITTLE WORSE...
SO I HAD IT LOOKED AT.
I LIED WHEN I TOLD YOU I WASN'T GOING.
I STILL GO FROM TIME TO TIME.
SORR-
NGH
SORRY
SORRY, SHUUHEI.
IF I TOLD YOU,
I THOUGHT YOU'D MAKE THAT FACE. .


I'LL GIVE YOU MY EYE,
I'LL GIVE YOU ANYTHING!
IT'S MY FAULT...
IT'S ALL MY FAULT!
DON'T HATE ME.
...DO YOU THINK I'D HATE YOU?
TOMO
ruffle
ruffle
WAH..
pat


DON'T CRY...




I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO...




EVEN THEN,
WHEN YOU CRY...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.
I DIDN'T CARE ABOUT THE PAIN
ALL I COULD THINK ABOUT WAS HOW I COULD GET YOU TO STOP CRYING
grip
YEAH,
EVEN THEN
EVEN AFTER SIX YEARS...
I HAVEN'T MADE ANY PROGRESS


He hugged me as I cried
And said "I want to stay with you"
I love him for that.
HOW'S .. YOUR RIGHT EYE?
SHUU- HE!
ARE YOU DONE CRYING?
UH, YEAH..
SORRY, I'M DONE


I STILL GO TO THE SAME DOCTOR,
THE ONE I WENT TO BEFORE
IT SLOWLY GETS WORSE FOR ANYONE WHO WEARS GLASSES
AH, COMPLETELY FUNCTIONAL.
NORMAL WITH GLASSES ON
I SEE...
I KNOW YOU STILL DO, THOUGH
...I TOLD YOU NOT TO WORRY.


Even if
it was an accident or if it happened by chance,
People usually distance themselves away, don't they?
IT'S NICE BEING WITH YOU AND ALL
YOU'RE IMPORTANT TO ME
NGH...!


HA.
AHAHA!


DON'T LAUGH!
SORRY,


HUH? WHADDYA MEAN?


Ha ha!
SHUU-HEI...
ARE YOU REALLY NOT AN ESPER?


BECAUSE,
IF YOU WEREN'T...


Then you wouldn't say the words
I wanted to hear...
AH, ESPER LIKE YOU TALKED ABOUT THIS MORNING?
THOSE WORDS
FROM A SIMPLE CHILDHOOD FRIEND
AH...
DO YOU REALLY HAVE SOMEONE YOU LIKE, TOMO?
IT'S A SECRET


WHA-
YOU-
YOU'RE ACTING REALLY CREEPY.
I TOOK YOUR WORDS OUT OF YOUR MOUTH, MR. ESPER.
HUH? WHAT'S WITH THAT?
CAN WE REALLY NOT HAVE BEER FIRST?
NO!!
MAI SAW THEM!
ARE THEY REALLY FIGHTING?
HEEYY, I'M HUNGRY!
...AND!


IS THE GYOZA DONE YET?
It's better...
to keep it a secret.
Both Shuuhei and this house are a treasure to me
WE'RE COMING NOW!
So I'm happy like this.


CHAPTER 2


DON'T YOU ALREADY WORK AT A CONVENIENCE STORE ON SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS?
I'LL KEEP WORKING THERE TOO,
BUT THE FAMILY RESTAURANT IN FRONT OF THE STATION PAYS WELL, SO..
THUNK
TWO AT A TIME, HUH?
A PART-TIME JOB?
IT'S ALMOST SUMMER VACATION,
SO I CAN WORK MORE SHIFTS SOON


Uh, how 'bout ice cream?
And what do I get?
Help me pick out what to study!
RIGHT, ABOUT THAT...
YOU'VE GOT FINALS TO WORRY ABOUT BEFORE THAT.
Or you will need supplementary classes.
Since then,
I'd still stay over at Shuuhei's three or four days a week,
and I still get lunch from my childhood friend
TOMO
But..


Shuuhei's changed a little.
SO...
DO YOU WANT TO COME WITH ME TO THE HOSPITAL NEXT TIME?

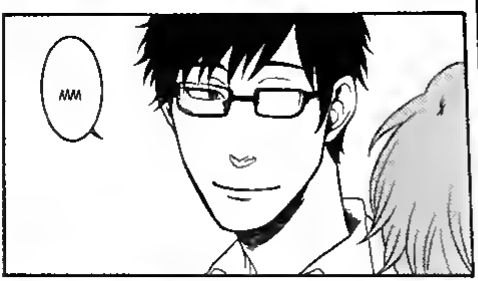

WELL... IT'S OKAY IF YOU DON'T WANT TO.
MY DOCTOR SAID HE WANTED TO SEE YOU, THAT'S ALL


IT'S OKAY IF YOU DON'T FEEL LIKE IT.
WHENEVER YOU HAVE TIME IS OKAY.
SO HE REMEMBERS YOU PRETTY WELL.
YOU WERE WITH ME FOR A WHILE AFTER IT HAPPENED,

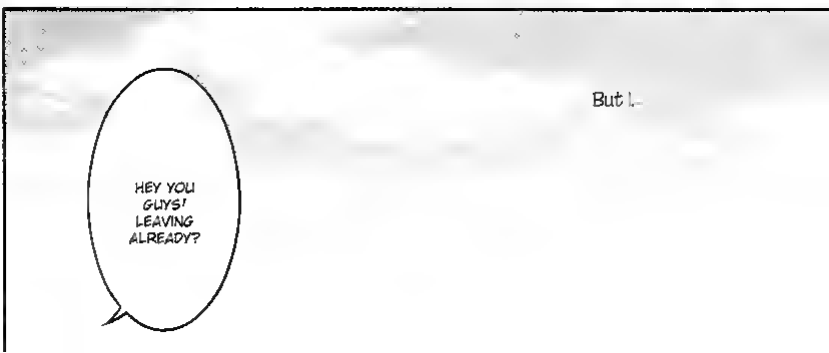

I JUST DON'T WANT TO PRETEND LIKE NOTHING HAPPENED.
He's trying to bridge the gap,
that formed between us because of his injury.
ARE YOU CRYING?
WHA-
NO I'M NOT!
OH, REALLY?


I GET IT ALREADY!


I'LL GO WITH YOU


MM


THAT'S GOOD THEN.
!
ruffle
ruffle


But I...
HEY YOU GUYS! LEAVING ALREADY?


OH, SORRY.
I'VE GOT WORK AFTER THIS.
SERIO-USLY?
TOO BAD.
WHY DON'T YOU COME WITH US TO KARAOKE?

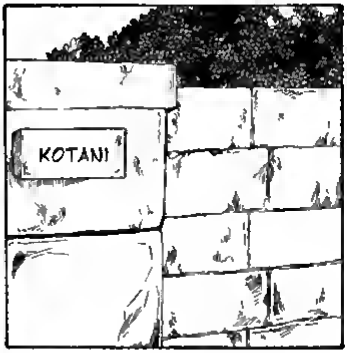

?
WHY ME?
WHY DON'T YOU GO, SHUUHEI?

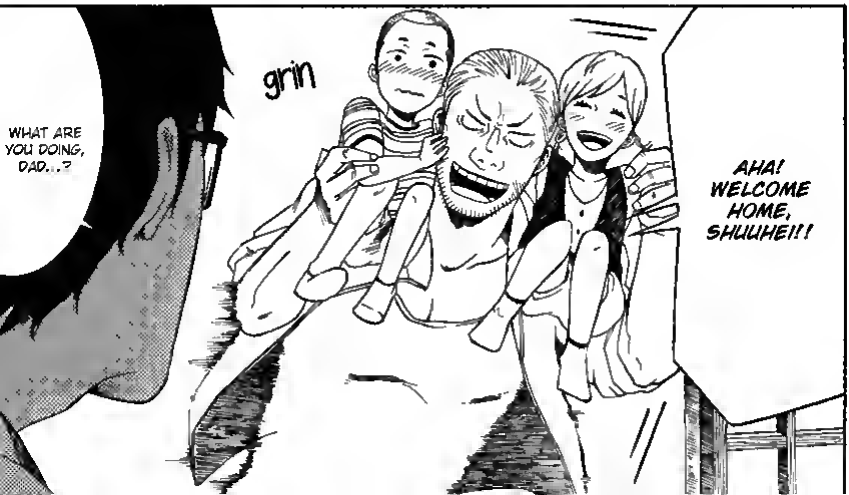

See you!
SORRY, I'M IN A HURRY.
GRAB
I HAVE TO GO HOME AND MAKE DINNER.
C'MON MAN,
THAT'S COLD!


YOU'RE COMING OVER LATER, RIGHT?
YUP! THANKS.
All I can think about is how I can't get my hopes up—
from his kind words.

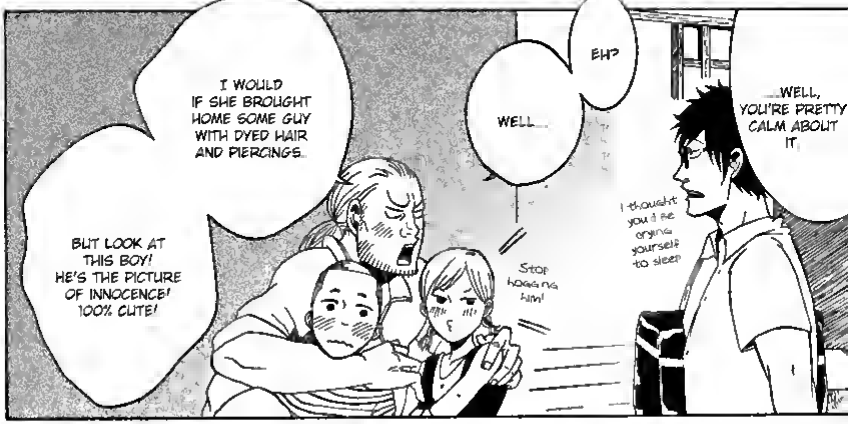

HUH?
?
Give me one outta ten minutes at least
So true..
YOU REALLY OUGHTA DO SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR "ONLY NICE TO TOMO" ATTITUDE.

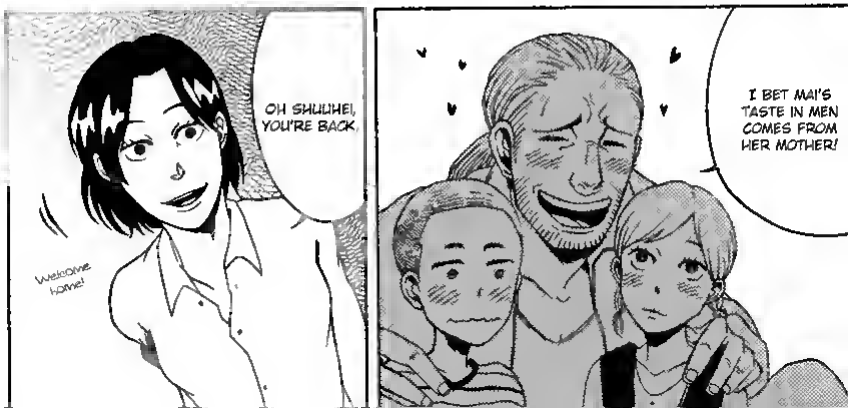

THUD
THUD
WELCOME
WAH!
WHOA, AWESOME!!
UH, WHAT?
I'M HOME..


KOTANI


grin
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, DAD...?
AHA! WELCOME HOME, SHUUHEI!!


* Was spinning them around on his shoulders
RIGHT?
There we go
RIGHT!
OH, MAI'S BOYFRIEND...
HUH? THAT BOY...
THIS IS YUUTO-KUN!


I WOULD IF SHE BROUGHT HOME SOME GUY WITH DYED HAIR AND PIERCINGS...
BUT LOOK AT THIS BOY! HE'S THE PICTURE OF INNOCENCE! 100% CUTE!
WELL...
EH?
...WELL, YOU'RE PRETTY CALM ABOUT IT
I thought you'd be crying yourself to sleep
Stop harassing him!

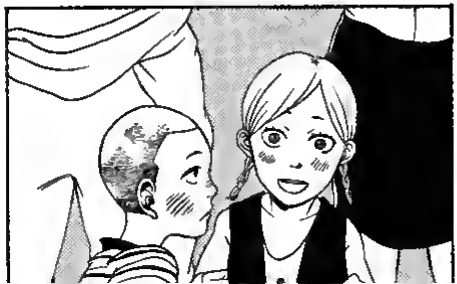

OH SHUUHEI, YOU'RE BACK.
Welcome home!
I BET MAI'S TASTE IN MEN COMES FROM HER MOTHER!


MOM
I'm back.
SO ABOUT YUUTO-KUN,
HE'S STAYING WITH US TILL LATER TONIGHT!
YUUTO-KUN'S MOM IS A SINGLE MOTHER,
AND SHE HAD TO STAY LATE FOR WORK TODAY...
HELLO, THIS IS KOTANI FURNITURE STUDIO SPEAKING.
DAD, IT'S A CALL FROM THE DELIVERY DESTINATION
THUD THUD
GOT IT!
THAT, AND MAI WOULDN'T GIVE IN ABOUT WANTING TO PLAY
BUUUT~


THANK YOU VERY MUCH
WHERE'S TAICHI'S PACIFIER?
CHATTER
DON'T JUST STAND THERE YOU'RE KINDA IN THE WAY
AH...
CHATTER
WAIT A MINUTE!
HEY, CAN I GO OUT TO PLAY?!
CLATTER
WOULD YOU TWO LIKE JUICE?
YES!


OH...






Tomo looked like this too.
When he first came to our house,
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO EAT FOR DINNER?
I WANT CURRY
I WASN'T ASKING ANY OF YOU
grrr
OH, DAD WANTS GRILLED FISH!
I WANT PORK FRIED WITH GINGER-

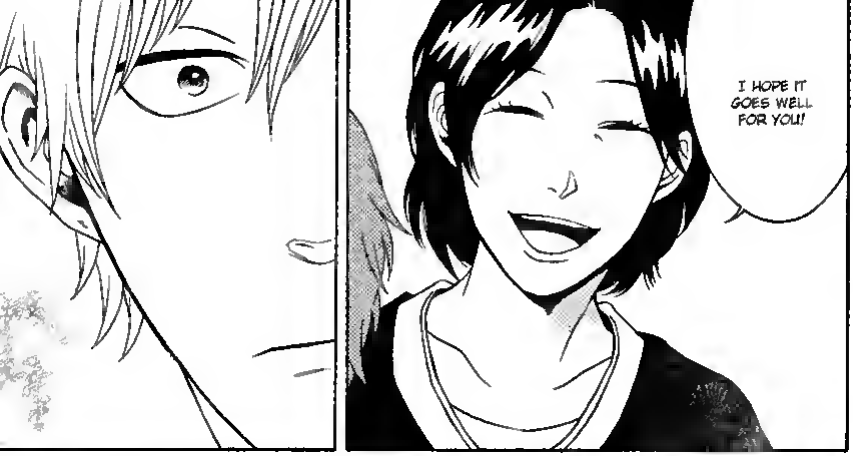

HERE
OH, GO AHEAD AND EAT
I forgot the miso soup
THANKS FOR THE MEAL!
WHAT?
No to the ice cream
HEY, BIG BRO SHUU! CAN I GET MORE ICE CREAM?!
I THINK IT'S MORE LIKE HIM BEING A MOM.
YOU MEAN PAMPERING
LIKE FEEDING AN ANIMAL, AS USUAL


HM?
SHUUHEI,
Feeling an animal...
WHAT HAPPENED TO MAI-CHAN?
SHE'S PROBABLY SULKING BECAUSE HER BOYFRIEND LEFT
BOYFRIEND? OH, THE ONE FROM HER KINDERGARTEN.
HIS MOM JUST CAME TO PICK HIM UP.


YOU'LL SEE HIM AGAIN AT SCHOOL!
BUT...
drag
drag
drag
GET OUT, MAI!
NOOOOO!
IT'S REALLY LONELY...
AREN'T YOU SAD WHEN YOU HAVE TO SAY BYE BYE TO THE PERSON YOU LIKE, TOMO-CHAN?
PFFFT
!!!!


HE LIKES SOMEONE!!
WHO IS IT, TOMO-KUN? YOU HAVE A GIRLFRIEND?!
NONONO, I DON'T, I DON'T!
Ice cream
WAIT A-!!
He won't tell me
IT'S ONE-SIDED, RIGHT?
chatter
NO, I DON'T
chatter
WELL THAT'S USELESS
SO DO YOU KNOW WHO IT IS, BIG BRO?
Awww that's sorta...
C'MON TOMO, TELL US WHO IT IS!
UH...
SO, IS IT A PERSON IN YOUR CLASS?
OH, NO...
OR DOES SHE WORK PART-TIME WITH YOU?


!!!
TOMO-KUN'S GOT A CRUSH ON SOMEONE.
YOU GUYS SOUND LIKE YOU'RE HAVING FUN.
Anyone want watermelon?
OH? WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?
NO-THING~
HUH?
NO, THAT'S...
MY, MY
So good to be young
BUT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE HEARD ANYTHING ABOUT A CRUSH
YOU TWO ARE TOGETHER 24/7,
BUT THAT'S UNEXPEC-TED


I HOPE IT GOES WELL FOR YOU!


...YEAH
THANKS, AUNTIE.


THEN WHY DON'T I TELL YOU ABOUT THE FATEFUL ENCOUNTER BETWEEN YOUR MOTHER AND I?!
WE'RE TIRED OF HEARING THAT.
...MOM.
AND I'D LOVE TO HEAR ABOUT MY SON'S PATH TO ROMANCE!
I'M BEHIND YOU ALL THE WAY!
YOU'RE PRACTICALLY LIKE OUR SON NOW.


rub
HE'S DOING IT AGAIN...
TOMO, LET'S GO TO MY ROOM...
BUT I LIKE THE STORY...
YOU GET IT, DON'T YOU, TOMOMI!
I'VE HEARD IT A MILLION TIMES,
OH!
REALLY?!
I STILL WANNA HEAR THE STORY, POPS


THAT'S RIGHT, IT WAS THE SUMMER OF OUR SECOND YEAR IN HIGH SCHOOL...
SHEESH...
HIS STORY WAS LONGER THAN USUAL TODAY
IT GETS MORE EXAGGERATED EVERY TIME HE TELLS IT.
FWUMP
A NEW CHARACTER POPPED UP TODAY TOO.


...HEY.
YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH SOMEONE, RIGHT? WHO IS IT?
BUT I STILL LIKE IT.
POPS LOOKED LIKE HE HAD FUN.
DO WE HAVE TO TALK ABOUT THAT?
ANYWAY, WEREN'T YOU GONNA HELP ME PICK OUT WHAT TO STUDY?
TOMO,
TELL ME.


YOU'RE SURE BEING STUBBORN
I TOLD YOU, IT'S A SECRET.
JUST THEN,
YOU WERE CRYING, WEREN'T YOU?
ARE YOU ALRIGHT?
flinch
DON'T UNDERESTIMATE ME
I CAN TELL FROM YOUR ATTITUDE WHEN YOU'RE CRYING


...YEAH.
I'M ALRIGHT.
WHAT KIND OF PERSON IS THIS?
IT MAKES ME WORRY.
glint
I'M EXPANDING THE SCOPE THIS TIME!
ALRIGHT, TIME TO PICK OUT STUFF FOR YOU TO STUDY!


WHY...
ARE YOU SO WORRIED ABOUT IT?
SHUUHH.
HM?
HUH?
HM... I WONDER.
YOU'RE LIKE FAMILY TO ME,
AND I KNOW YOU'RE A GOOD GUY
BESIDES,
YOU DON'T SAY IT, BUT I KNOW YOU'RE GOING THROUGH A LOT


IT WAS ROUGH WHEN YOUR MOM LEFT LAST YEAR, RIGHT?
YOU JUST STARTED COLLEGE, BUT YOU'RE ALREADY ALL OVER THE PLACE WITH PART-TIME JOBS.
HERE, THE STUFF THAT'S TAGGED WILL BE ON THE TEST.
HUH?
SHE WAS NEVER REALLY AROUND IN THE FIRST PLACE
AND MOM LEFT THE HOUSE A LOT WITH HER CUSTOMERS BEFORE THAT, TOO.
BUT I MEAN, MY BIG BROTHER STILL SENDS ME MONEY,
OH
HUH? I COULDN'T DO THAT...!
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT YOU'D SAY
THAT WAY YOU WOULDN'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT MONEY.
DAD WAS GOING TO ASK IF YOU WANTED TO STAY WITH US
BACK THEN,
STILL, MUST'VE BEEN ROUGH


WELL ANYWAY, THAT'S NOT REALLY WHY
EVER SINCE I GOT HURT,
IT ALWAYS FELT LIKE YOU WERE HOLDING BACK.
I GUESS...
I JUST WANT YOU TO BE HAPPY...
START MEMORIZING FOR NOW
DON'T GIVE ME ANY COMPLAINTS.
WOAH!
flutter
HERE, CATCH
flutter


DON'T SLACK OFF!
I'M TAKING A SHOWER, SO GO AHEAD AND START.
HUH?
OH, SHUUHEI


There are times...
when I just want to confess everything.

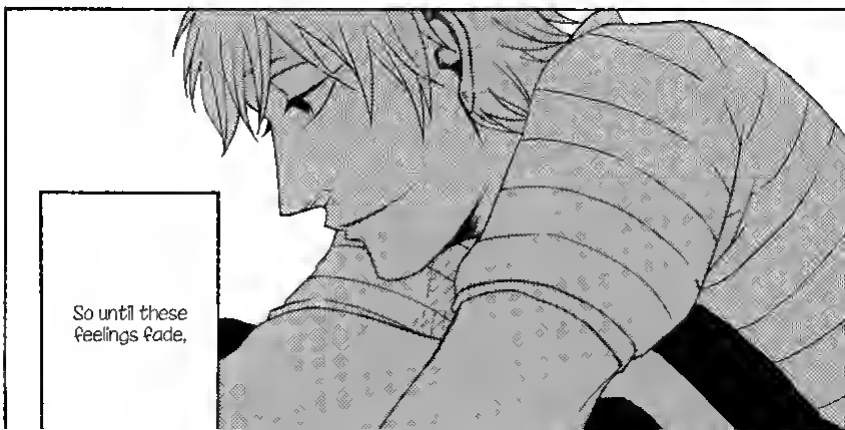

But I can't
Back then, Shuuhei
and his family
still welcomed me the same way they always had.
But there's no guarantee it'll be like that next time.
flip
And...

I get the feeling I'll lose myself, too.

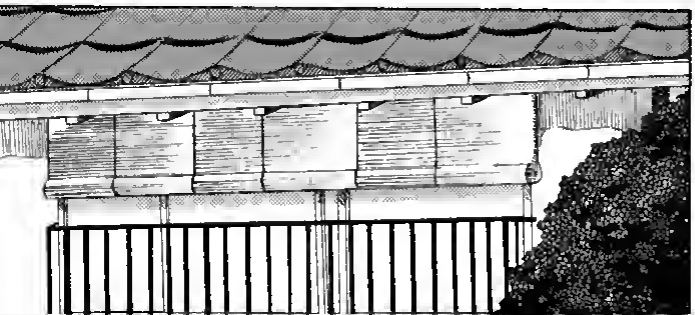
If I lose him,








YOU'RE IMPORTANT TO ME.
I wanted things to stay the way they are, but...
I JUST WANT YOU TO BE HAPPY.
He's so unfair...





T/N: SO HE'S CLEARLY NOT WEARING GLASSES IN THESE PANELS, BUT ON THE NEXT PAGE THERE'S A FRAME WITH TOMO TAKING OFF SAID GLASSES. SO I'LL ASSUME THE ARTIST FORGOT TO DRAW THEM IN...?


UGH... I CAN'T...
DON'T FALL SLEEP, TOMO.
GUESS HE DID STAY UP WITH ME PRETTY LATE LAST NIGHT.
KEEP AT IT.
I FEEL LIKE I'M GONNA LOSE TO SLEEPINESS...
I'LL MAKE YOU A SNACK AFTER YOU FINISH THAT.


brush




BIG BRO YOH.
OH, TOMO.
GOING HOME ALREADY?




brush
brush


HUH? YOU KNOW HIM?
YOU MEAN MASAKI-SAN?
HE'S STILL SLEEPING
YOU'RE UP EARLY WHERE'S SHUUHEI?
HE WAS A JUNIOR WHEN I WAS A FRESHMAN IN HIGH SCHOOL
MY BIG BROTHER'S IN THE AREA, SO HE WANTS ME TO GO HOME

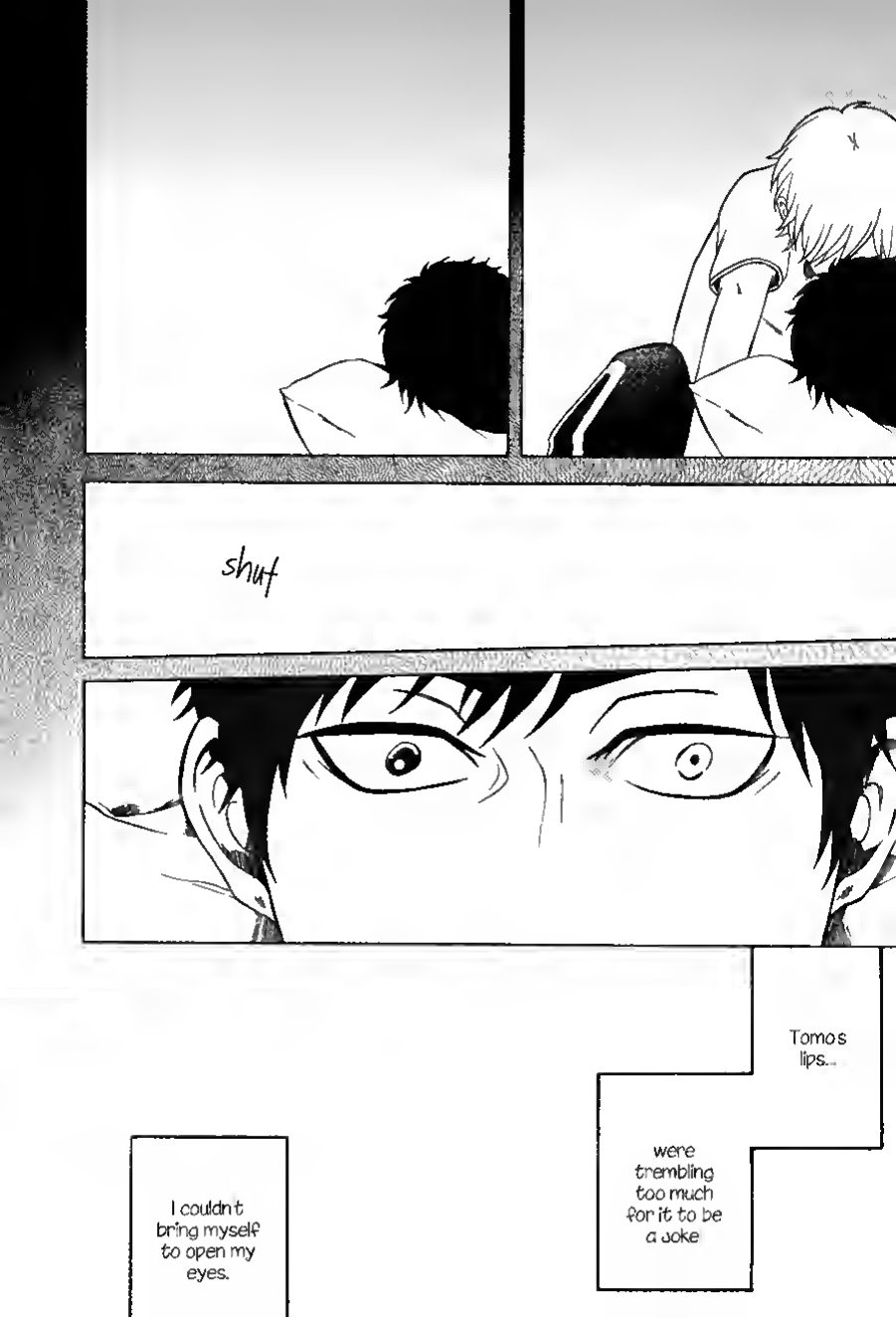

...
He was scary
BESIDES, WHO'D FORGET A BIG BLONDE GUY LIKE THAT?


Take care.
WELL, I'M OFF.
YUP.
SEE YOU.


HUH? YOU'RE AWAKE
SHUUHEI,


WHAT, STILL HALF ASLEEP?
SMACK
OW..!
YOU'RE ON BREAK SO GO HELP OUT AT THE SHOP.
OH... YEAH I KNOW, I'LL GO NOW.
...WHERE'S TOMO?
HE SAID HIS BROTHER'S IN THE AREA, SO HE WENT HOME.
flip flip
WHAT?
YOU KNOW,
YOU LOOK TOTALLY OUT OF IT.

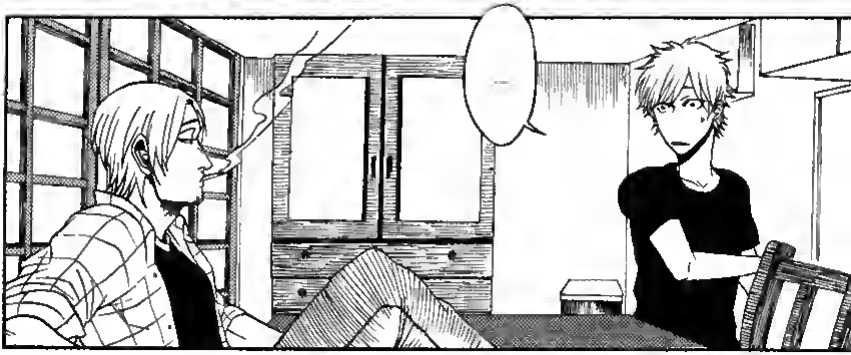

...HUH?
WHAT'S HAPPENING ...?
DID I SLEEP WITH MY GLASSES ON AGAIN...?
SOMEONE'S THERE...
TOMO...?


shut
Tomo's lips...
were trembling too much for it to be a joke
I couldn't bring myself to open my eyes.


I'd be fine as long as we could stay together.
That's what I decided, but still...
CHAPTER 3


HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN SINCE YOU LAST CAME BACK?
WHAT, YOU DON'T REMEMBER?
EVEN THOUGH THE BROTHER YOU LOVE SO MUCH IS BACK
...YEAH, YEAH
I WAS JUST SO, SO WORRIED ABOUT WHETHER MY CUTE LITTLE BROTHER WAS ABLE TO LIVE ON HIS OWN.
SO, WHAT HAPPENED THIS TIME?
UNEMPLOYED BECAUSE YOU HIT YOUR BOSS? UNDER HOUSE ARREST BECAUSE OF A DISPUTE WITH A CO-WORKER?
OOH, BINGO
The co-worker one.
clap clap


THERE'S ALWAYS A REASON WHEN YOU COME BACK HERE...
STAY AT THE HOSTEL NEARBY, GEEZ... IT'S NOT SO BAD, IS IT..
IF YOU CAME TO MY PLACE
WE COULD RENT A NICE APARTMENT


...


I THINK IT'D BE BAD IF I WAS A BURDEN ON YOU
AH WELL...
YOU DID SAY YOU COULDN'T BECAUSE YOU'RE GIVING ME AN ALLOWANCE ..


OF COURSE I'LL WORK ONCE I GRADUATE HIGH SCHOOL.
I'LL GET MORE HOURS AT MY PART-TIME JOB
AND MAKE MORE MONEY THAN BEFORE, SO..
JUST FOR A LITTLE LONGER...
ALLOW ME TO BE SELFISH
PLEASE.
HEY,
YOU STILL FRIENDS WITH THAT GUY?
YOU..
YOU'RE SAYING THAT EVEN THOUGH YOU KNOW I CAN'T SAY NO
EH..

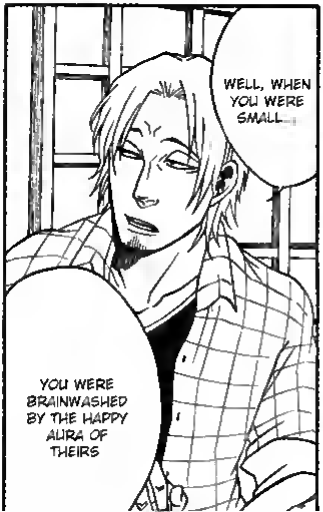

WEARS GLASSES,
WITH THE STUPID SIBLINGS,
THE GLOOMY GUY, THE ONE YOU CAN'T TELL WHAT HE'S REALLY THINKING.
YOU KNOW
THAT GUY?
THE ONE WHO CAN'T SEE OUT OF ONE EYE.
WE ARE
SO?
ARE YOU TWO STILL GETTING ALONG?
AHH, THAT'S IT, SHUUHE!
SHUUHE!

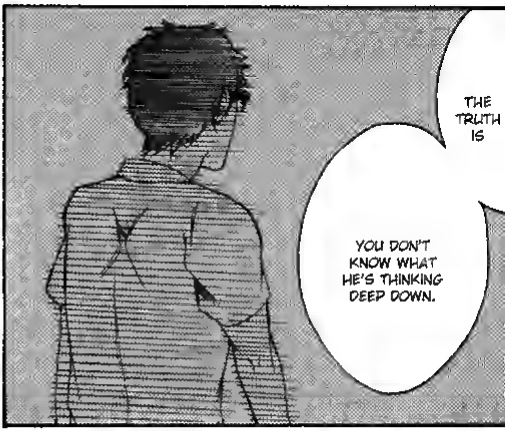

WHY DO YOU HATE SHUUHEI SO MUCH?
...BIG BROTHER.
HE CLICKED HIS TONGUE!!
CHE.
AND SINCE I'M ALONE NOW, HE EVEN MAKES ME FOOD LIKE I'M PART OF THE FAMILY.
AND HE'S NEVER BLAMED ME EVEN ONCE
AND HE WORRIES OVER THE FACT THAT I WORRY OVER HIM,
I . UH HE STILL TREATS ME THE SAME AS BEFORE, EVEN THOUGH I LET HIM GET HURT.
HE'S A GREAT GUY
WHAT A JOKE
HE'S NEVER COMPLAINED ONCE EVEN THOUGH HE LOST HIS EYE? TREATS YOU LIKE PART OF THE FAMILY?
I DON'T LIKE THAT.


WHY DOES HE GO THAT FAR IF HE'S "JUST A FRIEND"?


LOOKING ALL HAPPY ON THE OUTSIDE...
EVEN THOUGH HE SOUNDS LIKE A GOOD GUY WHO WANTS YOU TO BE HAPPY...


I HATE PEOPLE WHO ARE ALWAYS LIKE "MY HOUSE IS OH SO HAPPY!" ANYWAY...

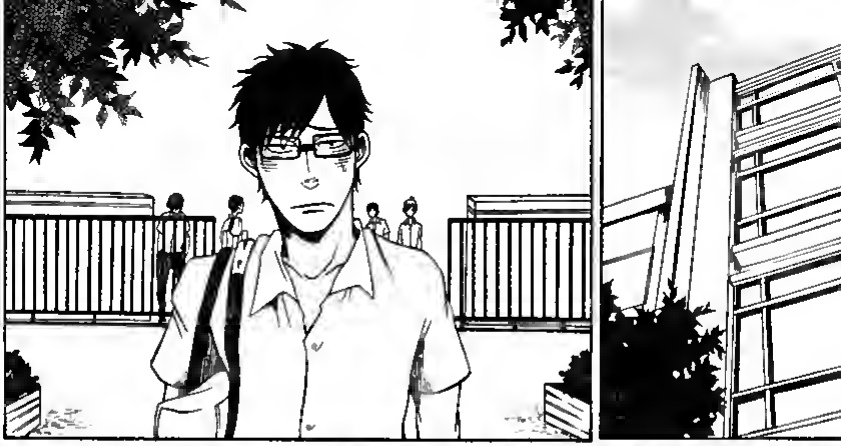

WELL, WHEN YOU WERE SMALL...
YOU WERE BRAINWASHED BY THE HAPPY AURA OF THEIRS

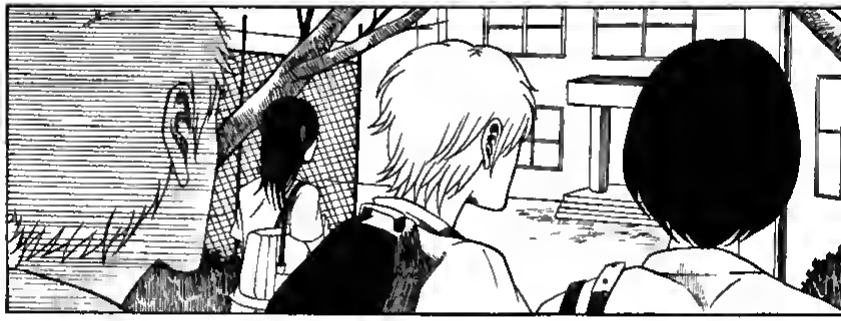

THE TRUTH IS
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT HE'S THINKING DEEP DOWN.


BEFORE THAT IT WAS ALL, BROTHER, BROTHER
AND YOU STUCK TO ME ALL OF THE TIME.
EVER SINCE YOU MET HIM
ALL YOU DID ALL DAY WAS TALK ABOUT HIM.
grab


clasp
YOU'RE SO INSENSITIVE
EVEN IF YOU SAY THAT, I WAS SO SMALL THAT I DON'T REMEMBER.
BECAUSE HE...
ANYWAY...
SHUUHEI ISN'T LIKE THAT


HE EVEN TOLD ME THAT HE WANTED ME TO BE HAPPY.
I WANT THAT FOR YOU TOO, AS YOUR BROTHER AND ONLY FAMILY.
EVEN I..
...WE LEFT THE RAMEN ON TOO LONG.
EH, IT'S ALRIGHT. I LIKE MINE SOFT.






AH, STOP, YOU IDIOT!
!!
PUNCH
HUH? SHUUHE!?
WHAT'RE YOU STANDING THERE FOR?
TOMOMI'S OVER THERE
TOMOMI!
BEHIND YOU, BEHIND YOU!


MORNING, SHUUHEI
M-M-M-
MORNING
...really?
AH-! NO, IT'S OKAY!
DON'T MIND WHAT THOSE GUYS SAID!!
Did something happen?
ARE... YOU GUYS FIGHTING? THAT'S WHAT I HEARD, BUT...


EVEN THOUGH THE TEST IS NEXT WEEK
I'M NOT WORN OUT AT ALL.
HEY, SHU-UHEI.
YEAH... SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
YOU LOOK A LITTLE WORN OUT, TIRED FROM STUDYING FOR THE TEST?
HUH?
YOUR BROTHER'S STAYING OVER?
UH... YEAH
MY BROTHER TOLD ME NOT TO USELESSLY STRUGGLE TOO MUCH,
SO HE'S BEEN INTERRUPTING ME ALL THE TIME.
AND I DON'T WANT LESS HOURS AT WORK...
OR TO FAIL THE TEST AND HAVE TO REDO IT OVER SUMMER BREAK.
WHA?
HE HAD A DISPUTE WITH A CO-WORKER SO HE'S TAKING TIME OFF FROM WORK.
...!!


THIS IS KIND OF...
AH... DON'T PUSH YOURSELF TOO MUCH.
slump
NOW I FEEL SO WORN OUT...
I'll do my best since Shuuhei helped me through it once.
NORMAL I GUESS
This Tomo...
Nothing's different, so it almost feels anticlimactic.


Did he
Really kiss me?
...HEY, TOMO
HM?
YOU-
HOW LONG HAVE YOU HAD ONE-SIDED FEELINGS?


AGH...!
MY BROTHERS COULDN'T SHUT UP ABOUT IT AND TOLD ME TO ASK...!
WHA... WHY!? YOU'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT THIS SINCE THIS MORNING!


SPRING IN THE FIRST YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL.


I SEE...
THAT'S AS FAR AS I REMEMBER.


YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE YOUR MOM IS?
NO...
I'VE BEEN TALKING WITH MY BROTHER ON THE PHONE, THOUGH.


SINCE I BECAME A HIGH SCHOOLER...
SHE MAY HAVE THOUGHT THAT I'D BE FINE ON MY OWN
SHE'S PROBABLY TOGETHER WITH THAT CUSTOMER FROM THE SHOP THAT SHE WAS GOING OUT WITH
...SO SHUU-HEI.
I MIGHT HAVE TO...
...HUH?
MOM DIDN'T LEAVE ME THAT MUCH MONEY
AND THERE'S NO WAY I CAN PAY THE RENT
MOVE IN WITH MY BROTHER.

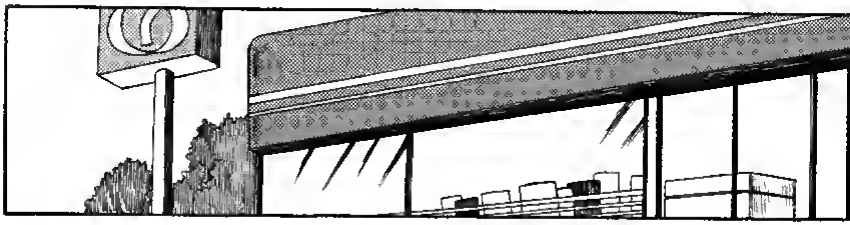

IT'S... PRETTY FAR AWAY.
AND HE SAID THAT HIS MANAGER SAID I COULD LIVE THERE TOO.
MY BROTHER IS LIVING IN THE COMPANY DORMS
I MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO SEE YOU AGAIN.
EVEN THOUGH WE FINALLY GOT INTO THE SAME HIGH SCHOOL
YOU KNOW...
...SORRY.


...THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE SEEN IT.
SHIT...
DON'T MAKE YOURSELF SMILE.
YEAH...
TEARS CAN COME OUT OF THE OTHER ONE TOO.
NO... I MEAN,
IT'S THE FIRST TIME...
I'VE EVER SEEN YOU CRY.

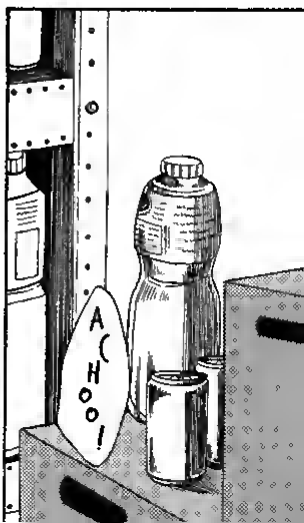

I CRIED ALL THE TIME.
...WHEN I WAS SMALL
MY BROTHERS WOULD TEASE ME
AND MY POPS WOULD SMACK ME SOMETIMES
YOU DIDN'T EVEN CRY THEN
I WAS ALWAYS THE ONE CRYING.
reach
IF YOU WEREN'T THERE.


I MIGHT'VE CRIED THEN TOO...
DON'T GO, TOMO.
HEY NOW, TOMO...
IT'S JUST THIS ROOM, BUT
WE'LL BE MOVING OUT...
BIG BROTHER.


I HAVE
SOMETHING TO ASK YOU!



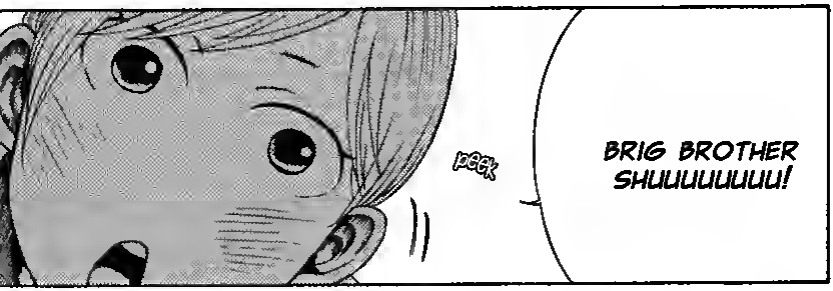

AH
MAYBE I'VE BEEN WORKING TOO MUCH


ACHOO!


Im sure
IT'S GOOD THAT I GOT MORE SHIFTS
BUT I HAVE TO STUDY FOR MY TEST
If I can make more money
A-CHOO!
I'll be less of a burden on my brother
and he'll stop telling me to move out so many times.
I have to do at least that much.
If I've decided to stay with Shuuhei,


"I WANT YOU TO BE HAPPY, TOMO..."
It's important to me.
"DON'T GO, TOMO."
"THE TRUTH IS"
"YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT HE'S THINKING DEEP DOWN..."
But
What would he think if he knew what I did to him?
SHUHEI PROBABLY
SAID THAT FROM HIS HEART, THOUGH...


I want to be with him
But still...
I NEED TO MAKE SURE NOT TO TOUCH HIM UNLESS I HAVE TO
FROM NOW ON


BRIG BROTHER SHUUUUUUUU!
PECK


IT'S ALL TORN UP!
SCRATCH SCRATCH
AHHH! CRAP...


UWOAH!?
THE GYOZA!
IT'S BURNING!


YEAH? WHAT
I'm busy here.
HEY, BIG BRO SHUU!


HAVEN'T WE BEEN EATING GYOZA ALL THE TIME?
CAN'T HELP IT, CAN WE? MAI KEPT BADGERING US TO MAKE IT.
JUST DO YOUR BEST.
ONE PERSON CAN ONLY DO SO MANY OF THESE.
HE EVER CALL HIMSELF THAT?
HUH? WHO'S THAT?
TOMO-KUN
THEN CALL UP THE GYOZA MASTER.
YEAH! THIS IS RARE
I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM IN WHAT, 4, 5 DAYS?
TOMO-KUN HASN'T COME OVER AT ALL RECENTLY.
Kay!
Bro, you help me out here!
WELL, HE DID


THAT'S NOT IT! HE WAS WORK...!
CHATTER CHATTER
WHAT!! I THOUGHT SO!
OH, WHAT HAPPENED?
BIG BRO SHUJI AND TOMO-KUN ARE FIGHTING!
WHY DO YOU GUYS SOUND HAPPY ABOUT THAT!?
DID YOU GUYS FIGHT??
AND DON'T COME BACK UNTIL YOU'VE MADE UP!!
TAKE ALL OF THIS GYOZA!
THEN, HERE!!
IT'S FINE, JUST GO
AH... HEY... I SAID THAT'S NOT IT...
smile
HAVE A NICE TRIP!!!


COME ON, SHUUHEI! GO GO SPEED RACER!
SHUT UP, POPS!
BUT HE HASN'T BEEN DOING SO WELL LATELY AND WE WERE ALL WORRIED
YOU MAY HAVE NOT HAVE NOTICED IT...
SHUU-HEI,




I'M SURE HE HASN'T EATEN ANYTHING DECENT...
NO, IT SHOULD BE FINE...


I'M HERE.


"SORRY, SHUUHEI!"
"I'M HEADING BACK FIRST!"


TOMOMI'S WORKING ALL THE TIME NOW, HUH?
No it's not!
Isn't it lonely?
JUST..
HE'S BEEN ALL OVER THE PLACE
ding dong
CLICK
STEP STEP
HUH, BIG BROTHER?
THE KEY..
Did you forget it?
CLACK
...SHUUHE!?
NO, JUST..
WHAT'S WRONG??

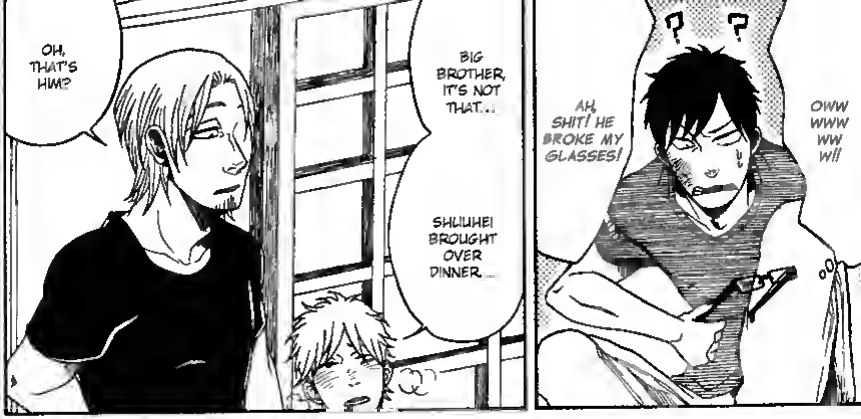

YOU... YOU REALLY OVERDID IT.
YEAH, WELL...
IT LOOKS LIKE I CAUGHT A COLD.
WHAT ABOUT YOU? YOUR FACE...
I BROUGHT GYOZA.
BUT I GUESS IT'S NOT A TIME TO EAT SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
AHAHA
I'LL TAKE IT
THANKS FOR THE FOOD.
SO...
MY BROTHER'S OUT BUYING FOOD.
COME IN?


THAT WAS DANGE-ROUS...
ba-thump
AH-
WOAH!!
TOMO,
JUST GO TO BED
MAYBE SOME MEDICINE WOULD


SORR... SHUU-HEI
LET GO
In that moment, I became aware


Tomo's body heat
His quickened heartbeat
and his slight shivering.
It all flowed into my body in one hit.
grip
TOMO, HEY...
DO
I couldn't let go of him.


HEEEY, TOMOMI
I BOUGHT ICE CREAM.
KA-THUNK
YOU LIKE-
YOU USED TO ALWAYS GET FEVERS...
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?
THUD
GRAB


OH, THAT'S HIM?
BIG BROTHER, IT'S NOT THAT...
SHUUHE! BROUGHT OVER DINNER...
AH, SHIT! HE BROKE MY GLASSES!
OWW WWW WW W!!


BUT MY LIL' BRO IS LIKE THIS TODAY, SO
I HAD TO CHECK UP ON HIM
MY BAD, MY BAD
Can't see
I THOUGHT SOME ASSHOLE PERVERT WAS ATTACKING MY LITTLE BROTHER


ISN'T IT FUNNY?
THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED ALL BECAUSE HE WANTED TO BE HERE AND PUSHED HIMSELF TOO MUCH.


OH,
LET ME ASK YOU A QUESTION.
TOMO HERE...
Here we go
SO TELL ME STRAIGHT,
ARE THESE FEELINGS SO HEAVY THAT IT'S ANNOYING?
HE CHOSE TO WORK ALL DAY AND NIGHT WHILE AT SCHOOL BECAUSE HE WANTED TO BE TOGETHER WITH YOU SO BAD
...NO
I CAN LIVE HERE!!
MY BROTHER SAID HE'D GIVE ME SOME MONEY!
SHUUHEI! LISTEN!


IT MAKES ME HAPPY, BUT I WON'T EVER TELL TOMO THAT
I FINALLY
JUST REALIZED
THAT I DON'T WANT TO LET HIM GO ANYWHERE EITHER


Final Chapter

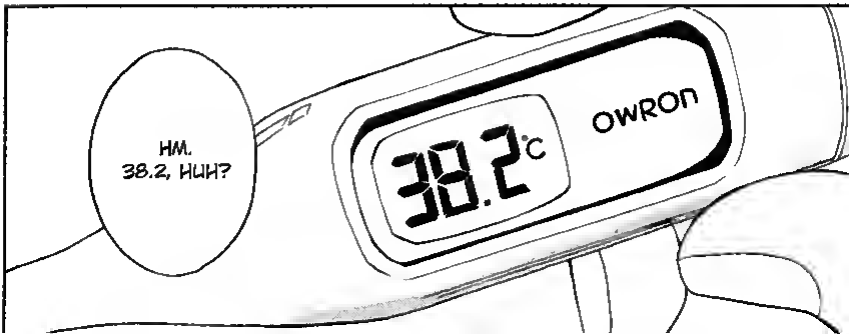

WHAT?
stare
...SERI-OUSLY, WHAT?
WHAT WAS I SUPPOSED TO DO?! THE OTHER PAIR BROKE!
These are my old ones!
AND YOUR GLASSES LOOK LAME.
I ALREADY TOLD YOU, THAT'S NOT WHAT HAPPENED!
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU SAID SOMETHING TO TOMO-KUN THAT'D MAKE HIM HIT YOU. YOU'RE THE WORST.
The worst!


ONCE YOU MAKE UP WITH TOMO-KUN,
I'LL REIMBURSE YOU.
THEN USE YOUR OWN ALLOWANCE, ALRIGHT?
MOM,
I'M GOING TO GET THE LENS REPLACED TOMORROW.
I KNOW, RIGHT?
WHAT IN THE WORLD DID YOU SAY TO HIM, SHUUHEI?
MUST'VE BEEN PRETTY BAD IF TOMO-KUN GOT ANGRY.
These people...
I CAN'T BELIEVE THOSE TWO ACTUALLY GOT INTO A FIGHT, THOUGH.
BIG BRO SHUU, YOU HAVE TO SAY SORRY, ALRIGHT?
GEEZ...
SURE, DAD UNDERSTANDS LOOKING UP TO MANLY FRIENDSHIPS,
WHERE YOUR FISTS DO THE TALKING, BUT...


I'M TELLING YOU,
WE DIDN'T ACTUALLY GET INTO A FIGHT.
THIS WAS... WELL, SOMETHING LIKE AN ACCIDENT.
THEN,
IS TOMO-CHAN GONNA COME BACK AGAIN?


Before, it would've been an obvious "yes."
Actually, I wouldn't have been able to think otherwise.
OH,
WELL...
THAT'S...
But now, we're aware of each other's feelings.
The answer
got stuck in my throat.


IT'LL PROBABLY JUST BE CAMPING, ANYWAY.
FAMILY VACATION?
THAT'S RIGHT! ONCE SUMMER VACATION STARTS, WE'LL BE GOING ON OUR ANNUAL FAMILY VACATION.
WE WANT EVERYONE TO GET ALONG AND HAVE FUN.
AT ANY RATE, YOU TWO SHOULD REALLY JUST MAKE UP.
I FEEL LIKE I'M MISSING A CHILD.


HM. 38.2, HUH?
38.2℃
OMRON


HEY, TOMO.
...
YO.
clonk
OW!
rustle rustle
IT WENT DOWN A LITTLE.
YOU WANT SOME ICE CREAM?
YOU HAVEN'T EATEN SINCE YESTERDAY, RIGHT?
STOP POUTING.
I'M NOT A KID ANYMORE...
I REMEMBER YOU USED TO LIKE THIS STUFF WHEN YOU HAD A COLD.
C'MON, EAT UP. I BOUGHT IT FOR YOU.

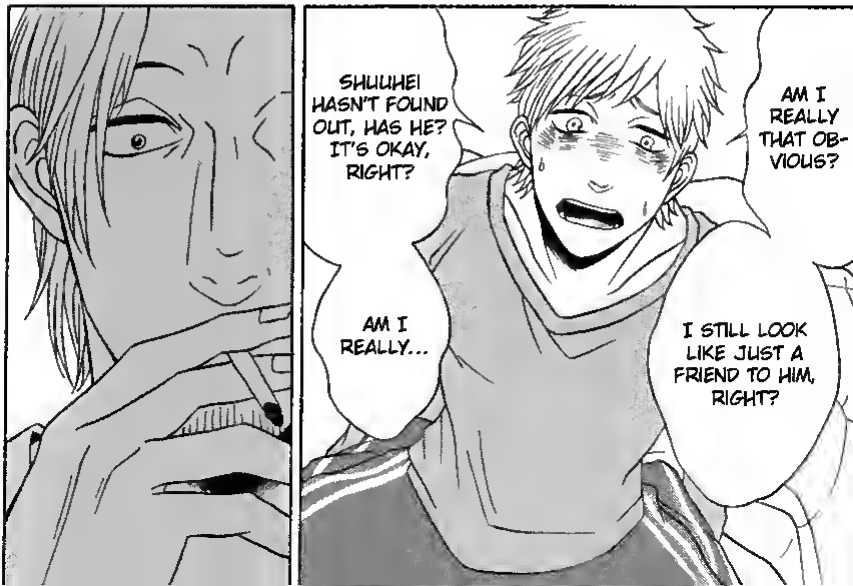

BIG BRO...
YOU'RE STILL POUTING LIKE ONE.
YOU SHOULD APOLOGIZE TO SHUUHEI NEXT TIME FOR HITTING HIM.
YEAH, YEAH.
YOU REALLY NEED TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT BAD HABIT OF YOURS.
HE WENT OUT OF HIS WAY TO BRING ME FOOD, TOO.
BUT YOU DIDN'T DO ANYTHING ELSE TO HIM, RIGHT?
I DON'T REALLY REMEMBER MUCH AFTER THAT.


NOPE...
NOT REALLY.
YOU
ARE YOU SURE?
LIKE HIM, DON'T YOU?
YOU'RE KINDA UNRELIABLE.
HOW RUDE.


I SAID,
YOU WANT HIM FOR YOURSELF, DON'T YOU?
WHAT ...?
IT'S TOTALLY OBVIOUS.
I MEAN, ISN'T IT WEIRD?
IT'S NOT LIKE THAT.
YOU'RE WRONG ...


I MEAN, I'D UNDERSTAND IF IT WAS 'CAUSE YOU DIDN'T WANT TO CHANGE SCHOOLS,
BUT YOU'RE DOING IT ALL FOR HIM, RIGHT?
WOULD SOMEONE NORMALLY DO PART-TIME JOBS AROUND THE CLOCK
JUST SO HE COULD STAY WITH A "FRIEND?"
YOU DON'T DO THAT FOR SOMEONE WHO'S "JUST A FRIEND."
THAT'S NOT IT...!
LIKE YOU CAN ONLY MAKE UP FOR IT BY CORNERING YOURSELF?
NO!
OR WHAT,
DID YOUR GUILT ABOUT HIS INJURY VEER OFF IN THE WRONG DIRECTION OR SOMETHING?


I...
I LOVE HIM. I REALLY DO.
BIG BRO...


SHUUHE! HASN'T FOUND OUT, HAS HE? IT'S OKAY, RIGHT?
AM I REALLY THAT OBVIOUS?
AM I REALLY...
I STILL LOOK LIKE JUST A FRIEND TO HIM, RIGHT?

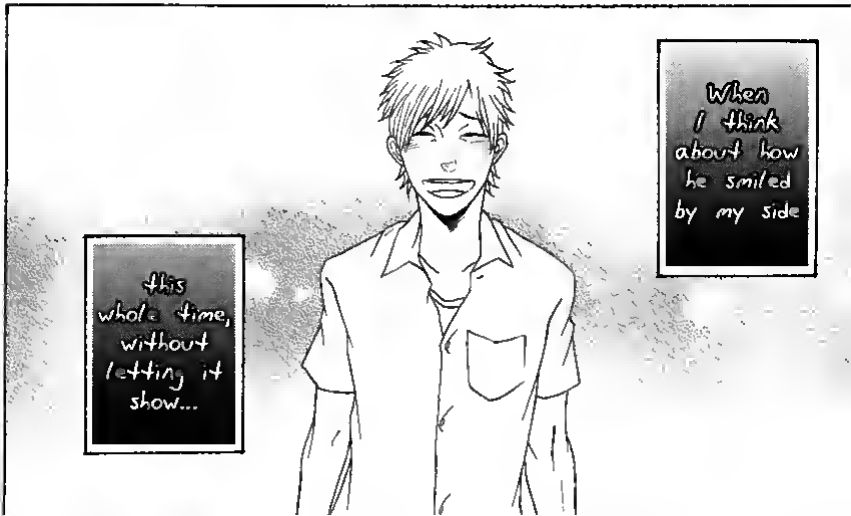

BUT...!
CALM DOWN, TOMOMI.
YOUR FEVER'S GONNA COME BACK UP.
ARE YOU REALLY THAT SCARED HE'LL FIND OUT?
BUT...
IT'S FINE... AS LONG AS WE CAN BE TOGETHER.
IF HE DOES, WE CAN'T BE TOGETHER ANYMORE...
I DON'T CARE IF WE CAN'T GO OUT, OR IF HE DOESN'T RETURN MY FEELINGS.
IT'S OKAY, JUST LIKE THIS...


HUH...?
HE DID SAY SOMETHING AFTER THAT.
OH YEAH...
HE SAID YOUR FEELINGS
ARE TOO HEAVY.
KOTANI-KUN!


THIS STUFF'S PROBABLY GOING TO SHOW UP ON OUR TESTS,
SO MAKE SURE HE GETS THEM.
OH.
MASHIMA-KUN WAS ABSENT TODAY,
SO WOULD YOU MIND GIVING HIM THESE PRINTOUTS?
YEAH, SURE.
THANKS.
NO PROB-LEM.
OH, AND TAKE CARE OF THAT INJURY!
SO HE DIDN'T COME TODAY, HUH.
WELL, HIS FEVER LOOKED PRETTY BAD YESTERDAY.
The truth is,


I'm...
a little relieved
that I didn't have to see him today.


My thoughts are still a big mess.
Is this how Tomo felt these past two years?


When I think about how he smiled by my side
this whole time, without letting it show...


HE WAS PROBABLY THINKING ABOUT ME AND MY FAMILY THE WHOLE TIME.
AND KNOWING HIM,
I realize how painful it must've been.
ABOUT HOW HE COULD KEEP HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH US GOING...
That's just like him...


ding
dong
ding
dong
silence


clatter


Tomo
Drop me a note when you're feeling better
There's something I want to talk to you about


No New Mail
KOTANI.
?
YES?
DO YOU HAVE A MINUTE?
IS HE ALRIGHT ...?


I WENT TO HIS HOUSE YESTERDAY BUT I THINK HE WAS SLEEPING, SO I DIDN'T GET TO SEE HIM.
I SEE...
Staff Room
HAVE YOU MET UP WITH MASHIMA LATELY?
OH... NO.
WELL, WE WERE CONTACTED BY HIS OLDER BROTHER.
HE SAID MASHIMA'S GOING TO BE TRANSFERRING SCHOOLS AT THE END OF THE SEMESTER.
WHAT...?
I KNOW HE HAS A LOT GOING ON AT HOME,
BUT THIS IS STILL PRETTY SUDDEN. I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT'VE HEARD SOMETHING ABOUT IT?


?!!
shock
THAT BAS-TARD!!
HEY,
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?!
No...
I don't want to let him go anywhere, either.
I'M LEAVING EARLY!
HUH? HEY!
SHOULDN'T YOU SLEEP SOME MORE?
DON'T WORRY, I'M FINE.


I MADE UP MY MIND.
YEAH.
THAT CALL...
YOU SURE IT'S ALRIGHT?
BUT...
BUT,
WELL,
TO BE HONEST, I STILL HAVE MIXED FEELINGS ABOUT IT.
I WON'T RISK HIM HATING ME, AND WE CAN STILL STAY FRIENDS.
THIS WAY,


ding dong
MAKE SOME FRIENDS AND GET BUSIER, YOU'LL FORGET EVENTUALLY.
WELL, ONCE YOU GO TO A NEW SCHOOL,
YEAH YEAH, SHUT UP ALREADY.
WHO THE HELL IS IT?
ding dong
ding dong
Shuu-hei?!
BANG


I said no!
I don't want Tomo to go anywhere!
I told you, didn't I?!
NO MATTER WHAT...
I'M HAPPY HE WANTS TO BE WITH ME,
BUT...
JUST COME!
pull
UM, I...
COME ON, TOMO.
SHUUHE! ...


SHUUHEI!!
SHUUHEI
...


ZOKUKI CLINIC
SO...
YOU NEED A PRIVATE PLACE TO TALK ABOUT SOMETHING?
The doctor was classmates with Kotani (father)
HAHA,
THAT'S TRUE.
THERE'S NOWHERE TO SETTLE DOWN AT MY PLACE, AT LEAST.
SORRY, I COULDN'T THINK OF ANYWHERE ELSE...


ALRIGHT, AS LONG AS IT DOESN'T TAKE TOO LONG.
YOU'RE RIGHT ON TIME FOR LUNCH BREAK, TOO.
THERE'S A PRIVATE ROOM ON THE SECOND FLOOR.
TOMO.
ARE YOU FEELING ALRIGHT?
YOUR HAND WAS HOT.
MAYBE YOU SHOULD HAVE THE DOCTOR TAKE A LOOK LATER..


SHOULDN'T YOU BE... YOU KNOW,
HAPPIER ABOUT IT?
HUH...?
TOMO,
WHY ARE YOU CRYING...?
YOU... HEARD WHAT I SAID, RIGHT?


WHY DO YOU THINK I HIT HIM EARLIER?
BUT...
I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING LIKE THAT.
BUT... MY BROTHER SAID...
THAT YOU DIDN'T REALLY WANT ME TO STAY...
HEY... ARE YOU REALLY GOING TO TRANSFER?
DON'T WANT YOU TO GO ANYWHERE.
I...
I SAID IT ALREADY, A LONG TIME AGO.
Don't go, Tomo.


AND MORE THAN JUST A FRIEND.
YOU'VE BEEN SPECIAL TO ME EVER SINCE THEN.
SORRY IT TOOK SO LONG FOR ME TO REALIZE.
TOMO.
YOUR WHOLE FAMILY'S BEEN SO NICE TO ME,
BUT IF I...
TOMO!
AND I CAUSED YOU SO MUCH TROUBLE...
I'M THE ONE WHO GOT YOU INJURED,
BUT...


TOMO.
?!!
YOU DID IT TO ME WHILE I WAS SLEEPING, RIGHT?
ABOUT MY EYE,
I DON'T WANT TO HEAR...
ABOUT ME, OR ABOUT MY FAMILY,
HEY, TOMO...


I WANT TO HEAR WHAT YOU REALLY HAVE TO SAY.
OR ABOUT HOW YOU CAUSED MY INJURY.
I... THE TRUTH IS,
I'M SORRY ...
I'M SO SORRY ...
I LOVE YOU.
I'VE... THIS WHOLE TIME...
I...
LOVE YOU, SHUUHEI.


I've loved you this whole time.
SHUUHEI.
HM?
UM...
THAT BRUISE ON YOUR FACE...
THOSE ARE YOUR OLD GLASSES, RIGHT?
OH, YEAH.
MY OTHER PAIR BROKE, SO THESE ARE TEMPORARY.
I'M SORRY ...
IT'S FINE. I WAS GOING TO GET NEW LENSES ANYWAY.

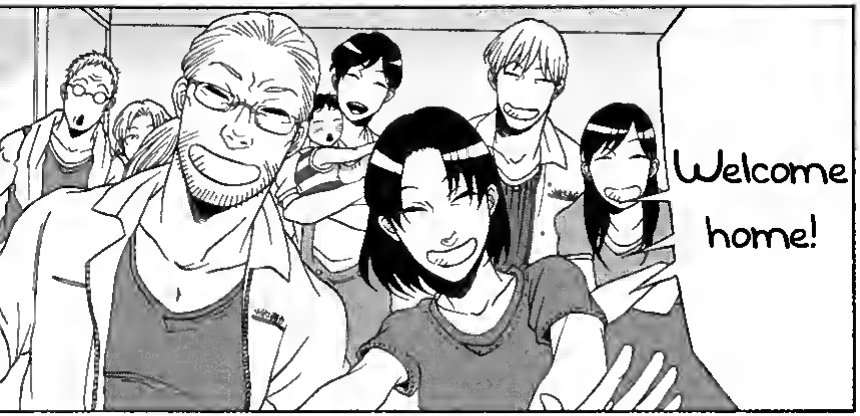

BESIDES,
THE PRESCRIPTION ON THESE GLASSES IS KINDA WEAK.
AND WELL... WHEN I THINK ABOUT EVERYTHING I SAID,
IT'S PROBABLY A GOOD THING MY OTHER PAIR ISN'T FIXED YET.
IT'S FUNNY,
IF MY EYE HADN'T GOTTEN INJURED,
I PROBABLY WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SAY ALL THIS.
SO IT'S FINE.


...THANKS.
Maybe it was because all his stress suddenly went away.
But Tomo's cold came back right after that.
He ended up bedridden all the way up until exams.
Tomo's brother and I never ended up getting along.
Don't get me wrong, this is all for my cute little brother.
It sure as hell isn't so he can stay with you.
He still promised to help support Tomo's decision.
DAMN BRAT!
GIMME BACK MY BROTHER!
HELL NO!
He made it pretty clear he hated me before he left, but...


ignore
I'd rather not have to deal with him for a while.
Tomo said that his brother was just worried about him, but...
Summer break just started the day before that.
Tomo finally came over to my house again, too.
Y-YEAH ...
IT'S FINE, TOMO.
rattle
I'M HOME.
thud! thud!
WELCOME BACK, BIG BRO!
JUST ACT LIKE YOU NORMALLY DO.


WELCOME BACK, TOMO-CHAN!
GOOD TO BE BACK.
IT'S TOMO-CHAN!
Congratulations on a love come true!
SO,
UM,
What?!
MY, IF IT ISN'T TOMO-KUN!
I TOLD THEM.
SORRY...
HUH ...?


ARE YOU FEELING BETTER NOW?
YOU WANT TO GO CAMPING NEXT WEEK, TOMO?
DO YOU WANT TO EAT DINNER? YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'VE LOST SOME WEIGHT.
OH, IT'S TOMO-KUN!
OH...
UM...


Welcome home!


They kept asking me if we were still fighting.
I got fed up so... I told them.
And I didn't want to lie, so...
I was scared at first, but when I said it...


EVER SINCE YOU SAID YOU LIKED SOMEONE,
I THOUGHT IT WAS WEIRD.
I MEAN, YOU GUYS ARE STUCK TOGETHER LIKE GLUE.
?!!
HEY TOMO-KUN,
WHAT DO YOU EVEN LIKE ABOUT SHUU?


What..
grin
grin


...when I said it,
They told me,
"Now he's a genuine part of the family, huh?"
End